INTRODUCING THE NYUER

You now hold in your hands the progeny of wild rumors and speculations -- the first edition of the AGSA (Anthropology Graduate Student Association) Newsletter. And, depending upon the goodwill of the gods who hover omnisciently above the NYU Anthropology Department, there will be another edition. And perhaps one after that.

But first things first.

The AGSA was formed one windy February afternoon in 1986 by a group of graduate students (an estimable breed) who, experiencing some alienation but really having nothing better to do with their lunch hour, decided to form a collective. Talk of a collective based on interest in feminist issues in anthropology had preceded this noonday meeting, but the AGSA's founding members, realizing the need for a broadly-based, cohesively organized student body within the department, expanded its horizons. The collective currently subscribes to no formal ideological, political, religious or otherwise, beliefs -- but who is to say what might happen. At any rate, the AGSA welcomes the membership and opinions of the anthropological student body at large -- needless to say, this includes archaeologists, linguists and those of the physical and social orientations. (Last but not least, I might add.)

The credo of the AGSA is to improve things in the department in general. We hope to encourage greater student involvement in department activities, facilitate faculty-student communication and vice versa, foster an intellectually stimulating and supportive atmosphere and to throw some rather good parties. Other suggestions are welcome.

Some of the achievements of the AGSA in 1986 are: the formation of the AGSA (no easy task), the establishment of a student-run lecture series on Mondays, the dissemination of a student questionnaire (results on page 2-3) and the holding of several meetings to engender socialization, ideas, and participation. Plans for 1987 projects are underway (see page 4).
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AGSA QUESTIONNAIRE: WHAT YOU LIKED AND DIDN'T LIKE
ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGY AT NYU

In November of 1986 the AGSA met to discuss what might be included on their agenda for the following year. The committee decided that it needed more information from the NYU Graduate Anthropology body at large so a questionnaire was designed and mailed out to all graduate students registered with the department. Approximately 100 questionnaires were mailed out, 34 students responded. The following were some of the trends discovered in the answers.

In addition to providing factual information about themselves (area of study, degree sought, etc.), respondents were asked to rate what they thought were the best and worst features of the NYU Anthropology Department. Among the items listed as favorable features of the department were: the flexibility of the program, the quality of the faculty, the interdisciplinary approach, the curriculum, the graduate student body and colloquia, the even class hours and research opportunities available through NYU. The unfavorable features focused on student apathy, the lack of study groups, and lack of communication between faculty and students. Many students also felt that the requirements of the program were not clear and cited a feeling of lacking support from the faculty to clear up these issues. Some students were also concerned about information available on funding and grant writing.

The questionnaire also indicated that while enthusiastic about the colloquia, many students have problems attending them due mainly to work responsibilities and in fewer cases due to childcare responsibilities. The questionnaire showed that 26% of the respondents worked between 11-20 hours per week, 15% worked between 21-30, and 26% worked between 31-40. Those that didn't work made up 21% of the respondents and those that worked between 1-10 hours made up 12%. Those who were critical of the colloquia suggested that more diversity in the lectures would induce them to attend.

The questionnaire also revealed what students would like to see in the department. Students in the Masters program thought that a course designed to support students working on their thesis should be implemented in their second year of study. More than half of the respondents felt that a course on fieldwork methods would be helpful (20% were unsure). Half of the respondents supported the establishment of a faculty committee that would meet with a student body to discuss the program, to hear and to respond to student problems, and to clarify rules and procedures (the other half were unsure). Other suggestions included: establishing a seminar course that focused on current readings in anthropological journals, developing a program designed to help students obtain grants, write grants and get their work published, and encouraging more visiting professors to broaden course offerings and to widen student contacts through exposure to outside researchers.

The AGSA questionnaire also revealed that students had questions in the following areas:
- what are the steps and deadlines for both MA and PhD dissertations?
- what are the guidelines for filing a thesis with the NYU Recorder's office
- how does one satisfy the language requirement?
- what are the criteria used to determine money allocation?
- what are the criteria for awarding teaching or research assistantships?
- how are comprehensive exam questions chosen?
- what are the duties of a professor -- how much time are advisors expected to spend with students; how much on comprehensive exams?
- what should students do if they cannot get faculty to meet for comprehensive procedures?

The AGSA wishes to thank those students who took the time to answer our questionnaire. The AGSA hopes to be better able to address your concerns and also to work towards implementing some of your suggestions. Anyone who did not fill out a questionnaire but wishes to do so now, can obtain a copy from either Hildi Hendrikson or Hilary Cunningham. Completed questionnaires can be dropped off in the "H" box in Rm. 213.
MEDICAL MALCONTENT

A graduate student in the NYU Anthropology Department discovered in the Fall of 1986 that, despite maintaining matriculation as a full-time graduate student, she was not covered by the NYU Hospital Insurance Program. This information came only after she had paid her premiums for such coverage. The Hospital Expense Insurance Program for NYU Students brochure is misleading about this kind of coverage. The student wishes other graduate students to be apprised and aware of this.

IN BRIEF: AGSA NEWS

One of the most exciting and profound changes to have occurred in the department over the holidays is the addition of a coffee machine to the Student Lounge in Rm. 213. Please feel free to use this! Also, the AGSA in conjunction with the history department is offering a film series. Watch for posters announcing the line up. Finally, a new Monday lecture series will be offered this Spring. Please attend!

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The current 'officers' of the AGSA are Hildi Hendrikson, Elisha Renne, Hilary Cunningham, Hannah Davis and Susan Gilbert. Notice of our next meeting will be posted. Please attend; bring your comments, criticisms and ideas!

INFORMATION ON THE HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

As part of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAINS) requires that "all proposals involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved" by the committee. "For dissertations, the entire proposal should be transmitted to OSP, along with Synopsis Form 2, Human Subjects Statement, Sample Consent Form, and Statement to Subjects. ALL DISSERTATIONS SUBMITTED FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL MUST FIRST HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE STUDENT'S DISSERTATION COMMITTEE."

The above information sheet may be obtained at the Office of Sponsored Programs, 15 Washington Sq. Pl., #1H. The procedure is not as daunting as it sounds. There are also three categories of research review-- exempt, expedited and full-- which may make life simpler if your project falls under the exempt category. The committee appears to meet fairly frequently, but they need proposals at least two weeks before the committee is to meet.

Elisha Renne

GSAS UPDATE

The GSAS Student Council representatives met on Wednesday, 12 November 86 at 8:00 pm in Rm. 310 of Loeb Student Center. The AGSA representative Elisha Renne attended the meeting. Discussion centered around 2 issues: the Centennial Celebration Fund and the revision of the NYU Calendar. Continued discontentment with Bobst Library was also expressed.

The Council voted to support a proposal to support student presentation of papers or moderation of a panel at a major meeting in his/her discipline. If approved the Dean's office would contribute $10,000 and the GSAS Student Council $5000 to help defray travel costs, up to $100. The money would be distributed for a 10-15 year period, probably beginning next year. Graduate students from all GSAS departments would be eligible.

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"IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT ANTHROPOLOGY IS AN ART NOT A SCIENCE... A MARTIAL ART THAT IS."

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The NYUER welcomes contributions to the next newsletter which will be available in March 1987. Please leave all contributions for Hilary Cunningham in the "C" Box in Rm 213.

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